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1. The bodies of several more people who died in the devastating floods in Nepal were recovered, taking the death toll to 392.

   i. The Nepal Disaster Risk Reduction and Management Authority said that rescue operations were being intensified to save around 1,500 people, including 290 Indians, who remain missing in the floods.

   ii. The devastating floods that originated in Tibet's Lende River entered Nepal's central districts through the Bhotekoshi River, causing widespread destruction.

   iii. The floodwaters, surging several feet high and carrying mud and boulders from the mountainous region, swept away numerous houses, buildings, bridges, more than 10 hydropower stations and other infrastructure. Several villages were completely devastated by the catastrophic floods.

   iv. The flooding initially occurred in the Bhotekoshi River in the district bordering Tibet and subsequently flowed into the Trishuli and Narayani rivers, severely affecting several districts, including Nuwakot and Dhading. With a heavy loss of life and property, the disaster has become one of the worst natural calamities Nepal has ever faced.

   v. According to a preliminary assessment by Nepalese authorities and a revised analysis by the U.S. Geological Survey, a massive glacial collapse in Tibet temporarily blocked the flow of the Lende River, which subsequently breached. The incident occurred about 20 km from the Nepalese border. The resulting flood, carrying ice, rocks and mud, surged through the Lende River and joined the Bhotekoshi River at the Nepalese border, before flowing into the Trishuli and Narayani rivers.

2. Meta has agreed to pay $17 billion (approximately ₹1.61 lakh crore) in compensation to settle a lawsuit in the United States concerning the addictive effects of social media platforms such as Facebook and Instagram on minors.

i. This brings a settlement in a landmark lawsuit jointly filed by 47 U.S. states.

ii. Meta was accused of deliberately incorporating addictive features into its apps to attract minors for profit. The states of California, New Jersey and others filed the lawsuit in 2023, alleging that these practices were seriously harming the mental health of children and that the company was illegally collecting data from children under 13 without parental consent.

iii. After nearly three years of legal proceedings, the trial began last week in a federal court in Oakland, California. Arturo Béjar, a former engineering director at Meta, testified before the court that the company had consistently prioritized profits over user safety. It was against this backdrop that Meta agreed to a settlement in the legal battle.

iv. As part of the settlement, Meta will introduce several new restrictions to ensure the safety of minors. Accordingly, daily time limits will be imposed on minors' use of Instagram and Facebook.

v. Notifications will be suspended during school hours. In addition, stronger age-verification procedures, measures to hide the number of likes, and content controls to prevent cyberbullying will be implemented.

vi. Meta will also pay $17 billion in compensation. The amount will be paid in installments over the next 10 years and will be used for programmes aimed at improving the mental health of minors, awareness and counselling initiatives, and after-school activities.

vii. At the same time, Meta has stipulated that 30% of the compensation ($5.3 billion) will be released to the states only if rival platforms such as TikTok and YouTube also implement similar safety measures, including daily time limits.

3. Prime Minister Narendra Modi said that India could win more medals if it participated in a wider range of sporting events at the Olympics.

i. He also pointed out that India does not participate in more than half of the events conducted at the Olympics.

ii. Ahead of National Sports Day, which will be observed on Saturday (August 29), interaction programmes titled "Khelo India – Interaction with the Prime Minister" were held in various parts of the country. Prime Minister Modi addressed the participating athletes through video conference.

iii. No participation in surfing:

- At the 2024 Paris Olympics, India participated in only 16 of the 32 sports. No Indian athlete participated in surfing or climbing. Both sports are also scheduled to be included in the 2028 Los Angeles Olympics.

iv. National Sports Day is celebrated on August 29, the birth anniversary of hockey legend Major Dhyan Chand.

4. The Goa Cabinet approved a bill prohibiting forced religious conversions. A bill to this effect is scheduled to be passed during the Assembly session beginning on August 31. Anti-conversion laws are already in force in Maharashtra, Madhya Pradesh, Uttar Pradesh, Odisha, Chhattisgarh and Himachal Pradesh.

i. Under the proposed law, anyone who converts another person through monetary or other assistance, threats, coercion, fraudulent marriage or similar means may face imprisonment of up to life imprisonment and a fine of ₹50,000. The law also provides for compensation of up to ₹5 lakh to victims. If it is established that a marriage was conducted for the purpose of religious conversion, the marriage can be declared invalid. Anyone who assists in such an illegal religious conversion, whether a Hindu priest or a Muslim cleric, may face imprisonment of up to 10 years.

ii. If an attempt is made to illegally convert minors, persons with disabilities, women, members of Scheduled Castes or members of Scheduled Tribes, the offender may face imprisonment ranging from five to 14 years and a fine of ₹1 lakh.

5. Landmark 10th anniversary of the Unified Payments Interface (UPI) on August 25, highlighting its revolutionary role in India's digital economy

(i) A Decade of Phenomenal Growth & Milestones

- On August 25, UPI successfully completed 10 years since its introduction, transforming from a novel concept into an indispensable part of daily life for both large businesses and roadside vendors.
- In the fiscal year 2016–17, transactions totaling ₹7,000 crore were made via UPI, which skyrocketed to ₹314 lakh crore in 2025–26—representing a monumental 4,000-fold value increase.
- The annual transaction volume grew from 1.78 crore transactions in FY 2016–17 to 24,162 crore transactions in FY 2025–26, an astounding 13,000-fold volume increase.
- UPI recorded 2,320 crore transactions in May 2026 and hit an all-time 10-year record of 2,366 crore transactions in July.
- On average, India sees 66 crore UPI transactions executed daily.
- The backbone of India's digital infrastructure now integrates 703 banks.

(ii) Technological Evolution of UPI

- Launched on August 25, 2016, by the National Payments Corporation of India (NPCI) under RBI supervision, the service initially started with 21 member banks releasing their mobile apps.
- The 'BHIM' app was introduced in December 2016, enabling users to transfer money directly bank-to-bank via smartphones.
- In 2017, QR code scanning simplified payments by auto-incorporating payee info and exact totals.

- 'UPI 2.0' was launched in 2018 as the platform's next technological leap.
- The 'Auto Pay' feature eased recurring payments like subscriptions, bills, insurance premiums, SIPs, and EMIs.
- Features like 'UPI Lite' (for PIN-less payments) and credit card integration continue to refine and simplify transactions.

(iii) Global Footprint and IMF Recognition

- The International Monetary Fund (IMF) has officially recognized UPI as the world's largest transaction system.
- UPI is now operational in 11 countries: the United Arab Emirates (UAE), France, Bhutan, Sri Lanka, Nepal, Singapore, Mauritius, Qatar, Cambodia, Greece, and the Maldives.

(iv) MDR Fee Controversy and Government Clarification

- The passage of the 'Taxation and Other Laws Amendment Bill 2026' early this month caused public anxiety regarding potential Merchant Discount Rate (MDR) charges on UPI.
- The Central Government officially clarified that the bill does not propose charging or taxing customers for using UPI or other digital payments.
- The legislative updates to the Transactions and Settlement Act are aimed at strengthening security, preventing online frauds, and upgrading technology infrastructure rather than implementing consumer taxes.
- The Government cleared up doubts by stating that MDR will not be charged on ordinary, low-value, or small-merchant transactions. Instead, it will apply selectively to a tiny fraction of large merchants crossing a specific transaction limit.

(v) Keep UPI Free

- Small merchants must not be burdened with transaction fees, as their inclusion is vital to maintaining a cashless ecosystem.
- Since UPI has crowned India's name globally as a fintech leader, it must continue to strengthen and remain a completely free service.